

and directed the Washington Wilderness Coalition. She was instrumental in forming an effective statewide community of wilderness advocates. To those who knew her, she provided never-ending inspiration and enthusiasm to keep working for the goal of protecting wilderness and wildlands in Washington State. Above all, Karen saw the potential and opportunity in everyone to be involved, play an important role, and make a difference.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington, a member of the committee, Representative JAY INSLEE.

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, this is wilderness the way wilderness is supposed to be done. I want to compliment Congressman LARSEN and Senator PATTY MURRAY for their efforts to shepherd and to fine-tune this bill. If anyone wants to see how to do a wilderness bill, come see how this one is done to take into consideration all of the local comments to pare this down to where we have the muscle and bone in this wilderness right now.

Boy, is it the right place to do it. I have a picture here of Gunn and Merchant peaks looking north from Baring Peak. I climbed Baring Peak, that is really just a little scramble, a couple of summers ago. What is so amazing about the Wild Sky Wilderness, it is both wild, and it is in the sky. It is only about 55 minutes from downtown Seattle.

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About 2 million people can drive to this incredible Wild Sky Wilderness in about an hour, and it is a hidden gem. What you can say is that we have a new hidden gem that has been protected in the State of Washington to join the other jewels in the crown of our wilderness and our National Park System in the State of Washington, and we invite people to come out and see it. And if you come, what you will see is a very virgin country very close to an urban area.

Millions of people drive by these mountains on Highway 2 and don't even realize how wild this country is right to their left as they are going east towards eastern Washington. There are hardly even any marked trails in there. So if you want wild close to an urban area, come to the Wild Sky Wilderness. It is a very, very wonderful place to go.

But there is a second reason I want to point out why this wilderness is so important. The day I went up to the Baring Peak, I just happened to meet a father and two of his sons he was taking for a hike. He told me this is one of the earliest hikes going into Baring Lake. And if you could see the smile on this dad and the sort of interesting looks on these two kids, you know what wilderness is about, because today when we establish the Wild Sky Wilderness, we are giving a gift to these kids and their kids and their

grandkids. So these kids could be in the same position as dad has been, sometime, to have a wilderness to take their kids and their grandkids to, and they will have the same smile on their faces 100 years from now as this family did that summer day up on Baring Peak.

I want to thank the people who have been involved in this, Mike Towns specifically, a fellow who has been working on this for over 10 years. He is a teacher in Redmond, Washington. I know he will have a big smile on his face today, too. This is a great day for the continuation of wilderness in the State of Washington. It is just south of the Jackson Wilderness Area. It is a tradition that Congressman LARSEN has followed and Senator Jackson, and a proud tradition of wilderness in the State of Washington. Congratulations.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington State, Representative BAIRD.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I simply rise to congratulate my dear friend and colleague, Congressman LARSEN, for his tireless efforts on this.

This bill has been around for several Congresses. It has had wide bipartisan support. And as my friend, Mr. INSLEE, said, this was done the right way. Mr. LARSEN held countless hearings, met with virtually every imaginable interest group. There were compromises, sometimes difficult, sometimes painful compromises. But in the end, we have a truly remarkable area of land set aside. And, Mr. LARSEN, our friends in the other body, Senator MURRAY and Senator CANTWELL, worked very vigorously on this, and I congratulate them. And, as Mr. INSLEE did, I also want to congratulate the many citizen groups who worked so hard on this.

I encourage my friends on the other side to recognize that no bill will be perfect, but this is about as good as you are going to get. This is an area definitely worth preserving, and the people on the ground support it, by and large. It is one thing to say that it is nice for people to set aside wilderness in their own area and not other areas, but doesn't that converse also apply in not opposing an effort of someone to set aside a wilderness in his own area? I would think the reasoning would suggest that it would, and I urge support from both sides of the aisle on this.

I would just finally conclude with this. It is not possible for us to construct or build new wildlands. We can't do that; it is not within our power. What is within our power is to protect the small remaining areas of wildlands for all the future generations. This legislation does an admirable job of achieving this. I urge its passage, and I commend my friend and colleague, Mr. LARSEN, and the entire committee for working on this.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California, Representative MCNERNEY.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, before I give my remarks, I first want to say

that our thoughts and prayers today are with the students of Virginia Tech and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007, and I thank my colleague, Mr. LARSEN, and other members of the Washington delegation for their hard work in moving this bill forward. The Wild Sky Wilderness Act shows what we can accomplish when small businesses, concerned citizens, and elected officials work to preserve the environment.

The bill allows us to protect more than 100,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land that includes habitat for species such as the spotted owl and the bald eagle. Hikers, skiers, and fishermen of future generations will enjoy the same pristine natural environment. As we protect our country's great outdoors, we also protect some of the greatest traditions.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is good for the economy, good for the environment, and good for families. I hope my colleagues will support this legislation.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as a cosponsor of H.R. 886, the Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007 to commend the House for taking long overdue action on legislation to designate the Wild Sky Wilderness. Today's approval of this well-drawn, meritorious environmental legislation is long overdue. I want to thank Congressman RICK LARSEN and Senator PATTY MURRAY for their tireless persistence on behalf of their constituents as well as Chairman RAHALL for his long standing support for the Wild Sky and for bringing this bill to the floor.

As a Member of the House Natural Resources Committee, I have been supportive of Congressman LARSEN's attempts to designate this area as wilderness and was continually frustrated at the failure of the previous Chairmen of that Committee to move this legislation and disappointed at the reasons given for inaction. Those arguments were without merit.

One of the benefits of working on this legislation was learning of the steadfast support from my constituents, the new Wild Sky Wilderness will be a popular and well-loved addition to my state's heritage of protected wild landscapes. It is overwhelmingly supported by my constituents, who live nearby. Indeed, the new Wild Sky Wilderness is within easy access of the people in the entire Puget Sound region.

This wilderness area, which is located in Snohomish County, enjoys enthusiastic support from the county council as well as our elected county executive. It also has the support of an overwhelming number of local elected leaders throughout the county, Democrats and Republicans alike, as well as a long list of local Snohomish County business owners. Over the years that the Wild Sky Wilderness has been before Congress it has earned enthusiastic editorial support from the local newspaper, the Everett Herald, as well as the major newspapers in Seattle and across the state.

I want to emphasize to my colleagues that in my State this is as popular and non-controversial a proposal as it could possibly be. I am pleased to mention the support this legislation enjoys from the Administration, including